

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

Claims 1-20 (canceled)

Claim 21 (previously presented)      A method of producing a vehicle steering wheel, said method comprising the steps of:

    a) producing a one-piece steering wheel skeleton having a hub, at least one spoke and a steering wheel rim by one of casting and injection-molding processes and not by securing separate parts together, and, forming recesses on said steering wheel rim during one of said casting and injection-molding processes,

    b) gluing an intermediate layer made of soft foam directly onto said steering wheel rim over said recesses, and

    c) covering said intermediate layer with leather by gluing said leather directly onto said intermediate layer.

Claim 22 (previously presented)      The method according to claim 21, wherein said step of forming said recesses on said steering wheel rim includes the step of forming recesses on opposite sides of said steering wheel rim, with respect to a cross-section of said steering wheel rim.

Claim 23 (previously presented)      The method according to claim 22, wherein said step of producing said one-piece

steering wheel skeleton including the step of forming projections on said steering wheel rim which extend approximately radially with respect to said cross-section of said steering wheel rim.

Claim 24 (previously presented)      The method according to claim 23, further including the step of bending said projections with a deburring press to cover said recesses, prior to said step of gluing said intermediate layer onto said steering wheel rim.

Claim 25 (previously presented)      The method according to claim 21, wherein said step of producing said one-piece steering wheel skeleton includes the step of producing said steering wheel rim with a cross-section which defines the final outer geometry of the finished vehicle steering wheel, prior to performing said steps of gluing said intermediate layer and covering with said leather.

Claim 26 (previously presented)      The method according to claim 25, including the steps of selecting an intermediate layer made of soft foam having a constant thickness throughout and selecting leather having a constant thickness throughout, prior to performing said steps of gluing said intermediate layer and covering said intermediate layer with said leather.

Claim 27 (previously presented)      The method according to claim 21, wherein said step of producing said steering wheel

skeleton by casting comprises one of an aluminum and magnesium pressure die-casting.

Claim 28 (previously presented)      A method of producing a vehicle steering wheel, said method comprising the steps of:

a) producing a one-piece steering wheel skeleton having a hub, at least one spoke and a steering wheel rim by one of casting and injection-molding and not by securing separate parts together, and

b) gluing a cover consisting of an inner intermediate layer made of soft foam and an outer layer made of leather directly onto the steering wheel rim so that the inner intermediate layer directly engages said steering wheel rim.

Claim 29 (previously presented)      The method according to claim 28 wherein, said step of producing said steering wheel skeleton by casting comprises one of an aluminum and magnesium pressure die-casting.

Claim 30 (withdrawn)      A vehicle steering wheel comprising:

a steering wheel skeleton having a hub, at least one spoke and a steering wheel rim, said steering wheel skeleton being one piece and not separate parts secured together,

said steering wheel rim having at least an underside perimeter with respect to a cross-section of said rim, and numerous recesses extending into said underside perimeter and terminating at a location within said steering wheel rim, and

a pre-manufactured cover attached to said steering wheel rim to cover said recesses, said cover consisting of an intermediate layer made of soft foam which engages said steering wheel rim and an outer layer made of leather.

Claim 31 (withdrawn)      The vehicle steering wheel according to claim 30, wherein said intermediate layer of said cover is glued directly to said steering wheel rim.

Claim 32 (withdrawn)      The vehicle steering wheel according to claim 30, wherein at least one of said intermediate layer and said outer leather layer has a constant thickness.

Claim 33 (withdrawn)      The vehicle steering wheel according to claim 30, wherein said steering wheel rim underside perimeter includes a plurality of projections for covering said recesses.

Claim 34 (withdrawn)      The vehicle steering wheel according to claim 30, wherein said steering wheel rim includes webs located in said recesses to divide said recesses.

Claim 35 (previously presented)      A method of producing a vehicle steering wheel, said method comprising the steps of:

a) producing a one-piece steering wheel skeleton having a hub, at least one spoke and a steering wheel rim by one of casting and injection-molding and not by securing separate parts together, and, forming recesses on said steering wheel

rim during one of said casting and injection-molding processes, and

b) gluing a cover consisting of an inner intermediate layer made of soft foam and an outer layer made of leather directly onto the steering wheel rim so that the inner intermediate layer directly engages said steering wheel rim.

Claim 36 (previously presented)      The method according to claim 35, wherein said step of forming recesses on said steering wheel rim during one of said casting and injection-molding processes includes the steps of forming recesses on both said underside and a side opposite said underside of said steering wheel rim, with respect to a cross-section of said steering wheel rim.

Claim 37 (previously presented)      The method according to claim 36, wherein the step of forming said steering wheel rim includes the step of forming projections on said steering wheel rim which extend approximately radially with respect to said cross-section of said steering wheel rim.

Claim 38 (previously presented)      The method according to claim 37, further including the step of bending said projections with a deburring press to cover said recesses, prior to said step of gluing said cover onto said steering wheel rim.

Claim 39 (withdrawn)      A vehicle steering wheel comprising:

a steering wheel skeleton having a hub, at least one spoke and a steering wheel rim, said steering wheel skeleton being one piece and not separate parts secured together,

said steering wheel rim having an underside perimeter and at least one recess extending into said underside perimeter and terminating within said steering wheel rim, and

an insert having a structure separate from said steering wheel rim located in said recess to cover said recess, said insert and said steering wheel rim together forming a continuously extending outer perimeter of the steering wheel rim with respect to a cross-section of the steering wheel rim at that location,

a pre-manufactured cover attached to said steering wheel rim and said insert to cover said outer perimeter, said cover consisting of an intermediate layer made of soft foam which engages said steering wheel rim and said insert and an outer layer made of leather.